

EPI Update for Friday, January 11, 2008

Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE)

Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)

Items for this week's EPI Update include:

- **Rabies control**
- **Bedbugs**
- **Influenza update**
- **Meeting announcements and training opportunities**

Rabies control

A recent article in the Center for Disease Control's Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report highlights the need for continued animal rabies-control programs. At a large softball tournament in South Carolina, 38 young athletes from four states were exposed to rabies while petting a rabid kitten found in a garbage bin near playgrounds. The kitten was taken home by a coach and the next day became ill. Rabies was not immediately suspected. Most rabid domesticated animals are infected with the terrestrial rabies--virus variant associated with the geographic location of the animal. This kitten was found to have raccoon associated rabies.

Since the 1950s, animal rabies-control programs have reduced the rate of rabies in domesticated animals in the U.S. by over 82 percent. Despite this decline, stray animals, including cats, continue to pose a risk for transmission of rabies to humans. Measures to reduce rabies exposures among humans by promotion of responsible pet ownership and routine vaccination of cats and dogs remain public health priorities.

For more information, visit

www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5651a1.htm?s_cid=mm5651a1_e.

Bedbugs

Bedbug infestations appear to be making a comeback across the U.S. One IDPH staff member experienced this personally in a Des Moines hotel last year. New York City has experienced an increase in bedbug complaints of over *1100 percent* between 2004 and 2007.

Bedbugs have been a persistent problem for centuries. Bedbugs seek human blood by biting at night and nest easily in mattresses, box springs and other furniture found in homes. Getting rid of an infestation is difficult, requiring thorough cleaning and fumigation efforts. Fortunately, no human diseases seem to be linked to their bites. If you're itching for more information, visit www.idph.state.il.us/envhealth/pcbbugs.htm.

Influenza update

Influenza activity is increasing throughout the state. We are currently experiencing local level activity, meaning there are minimal outbreaks but several laboratory-confirmed cases. Laboratory-confirmed cases are occurring in all age groups including middle-aged adults. All three strains of influenza, AH1, AH3, and B, are circulating in Iowa and AH3 is the predominant strain. Please continue testing patients suspected of having influenza and submit specimens to the University Hygienic Laboratory. For information on specimen submission, visit www.uhl.uiowa.edu/kitsquotesforms.

For more information about the Iowa Influenza Surveillance Network weekly report, visit www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/iisn.asp.

Meeting announcements and training opportunities

“Norovirus School Prevention and Management”

Iowa Communications Network, January 28, 2:00 – 3:00 p.m.

Public health personnel are asked to help promote this ICN to our colleagues in the school setting. This ICN from K-12 Connections will discuss school-related prevention of norovirus outbreaks.

For more information, visit www.iptv.org/iowa_database/event-detail.cfm?ID=8503.

Have a healthy and happy week! And don't let the bedbugs bite!

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